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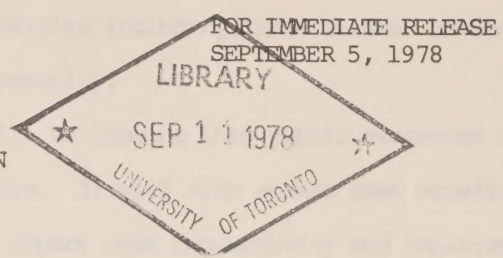




Commission of Inquiry  
on Educational Leave  
and Productivity

Commission d'enquête  
sur le congé-éducation  
et la productivité

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EDUCATIONAL LEAVE COMMISSION  
RELEASES DISCUSSION PAPER

HAMILTON...."Educational leave has immense implications for individuals, industry and education in Canada" said Dr. Roy J. Adams as he released a discussion paper Educational Leave today in preparation for public hearings to be held later this year.

"What we are actually considering is the future relationship between the worlds of work and education in Canada."

Since adoption of paid educational leave by the 1976 Canadian Labour Congress convention, several unions have made it a bargaining priority. For example, the United Auto Workers now have over 25,000 employees governed by PEL with the employer contributing one cent per hour per worker to an educational fund operated by the union. The first UAW program begins this September.

"Labour education programs are crucial to the labour movement," according to the CLC Executive Vice-President Julien Major. "Every worker should have access to education."

Dr. Adams says the Commission plans to study the issue of educational leave and productivity over the next year and is encouraging

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wide-spread public discussion. The Commission is actively seeking submissions from interested parties including trade unions; business groups and the educational community.

The Commission will be looking into public awareness and commitment to educational leave. It will also assess cost benefits of educational leave and its impact upon productivity and employment.

Members of the Commission are Chairman Roy J. Adams, Personnel and Industrial Relations Area, Faculty of Business, McMaster University; Mr. Patrick M. Draper, recently retired vice-president of Canron, Ltd. and a former Chairman of the Ontario Labour Relations Board; and Mr. Claude Ducharme, representative of the United Auto Workers Union of America.


Labour Minister John Munro announced the establishment of the Commission, May 31, 1978.

A copy of the discussion paper Educational Leave is attached for your information. For further information contact Dr. Roy Adams.





## EDUCATIONAL LEAVE: A DISCUSSION PAPER



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## EDUCATIONAL LEAVE: A DISCUSSION PAPER

During the past decade the concept of educational leave has been the subject of considerable international attention. In 1974 the International Labour Organization, a tripartite (Business, Labour, Government) agency associated with the United Nations, passed a recommendation and convention on the issue and several European countries have introduced legislation concerning educational leave. It was in this milieu that the Minister of Labour for Canada, on May 31, 1978, appointed a Commission on Educational Leave and Productivity. Specifically we have been asked to accomplish the following by June 30, 1979:

1. to inquire into public awareness, interest in and commitment to leave for educational purposes
2. to review current practice both in Canada and elsewhere
3. to receive briefs from concerned persons containing their views on various systems of leave for educational purposes
4. to make an assessment of the cost-benefits of educational leave and its impact upon productivity and employment
5. to make such recommendations with respect to public policy or policies that might be adopted by labour and management as may seem appropriate
6. any matters incidental or relating to any of the foregoing matters.

In order to fulfill our mandate, we plan to receive briefs from interested parties and to hold hearings across the country. This discussion paper has been prepared in order to assist parties to prepare their submissions.

## The Background

After some ten years of discussion the ILO, in 1974 recommended that each of its member countries (of which Canada is one) "should formulate and apply a policy designed to promote, by methods appropriate to national conditions and practice and by stages as necessary the granting of paid educational leave for the purpose of:

- a) training at any level
- b) general, social and civic education
- c) trade union education"

Paid educational leave was defined by the ILO as "leave granted to a worker for educational purposes for a specified period during working hours, with adequate financial entitlements". In short, the concept is a very open and flexible one. As defined by the ILO it would include: leave granted to union officials to attend labour education courses, leave granted to federal government employees to study intensively one of Canada's two official languages, time granted by industrial enterprises to employees so that they might attend seminars and conferences related to their work, leave granted to skilled worker trainees under apprenticeship programs, leave granted to employees during their normal working hours so that they might attend a one- or two-hour course, sabbatical leave granted to university professors and some business executives, and professional development days taken by school teachers.

Unlike the ILO convention our mandate is not restricted to "paid" leave and therefore would include unpaid leaves currently granted to employees so that they might return to university or college.

In addition to the foregoing examples there are several additional related educational activities. For example, the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission supports several programs designed to provide training for those who are unemployed. Canadian adults take night school courses provided by school boards, colleges, universities and other organizations. The cost of these courses is sometimes borne by employers. Such activities would not appear to fall within any reasonable definition of educational leave. They are, however, of interest to the Commission to the extent that they may effect and be affected by educational leave schemes.

#### Educational Leave Schemes

As should be apparent from the above discussion, educational leave is not a new concept and indeed many Canadian employees are the beneficiaries of existing schemes. From current data we are unable, however, to estimate the extent and variety of such schemes and would welcome submissions in this regard. We also plan to systematically

survey Canadian practice to the extent possible given the constraints of time and money. The foreign experience will also be surveyed. To date a good deal of research on European practice has been carried out and we plan to update that research.

The universe of possible educational leave schemes is limited only by the imagination. Experience to date indicates that when considering educational leave, several questions must be addressed.

1. How is it, or might it be, introduced?

There are three primary modes: by employers unilaterally, via collective bargaining and via legislation. Our preliminary research indicates that most existing educational leave in Canada has been introduced unilaterally by employers. In Europe a combination of all three methods is to be found. Legislation has become more prevalent in recent years and may be found in several countries including West Germany, France, Belgium, Sweden and Great Britain. Examples of both the collective bargaining and legislative route are to be found in Canada, however. Some unions for example, have recently negotiated clauses permitting officials to take time off to attend courses on trade

union practice. In at least one province, New Brunswick, a bill has been introduced which would require employers to grant unpaid educational leave to their employees. The ILO recommendation does not suggest any specific method of introduction. Rather it suggests that each country promote educational leave by methods appropriate to national conditions.

## 2. Leave for what purpose?

In Canada most existing leave appears to be granted for job or career training and to a lesser extent for trade union training. The ILO recommendation also notes education for general, social and civic reasons as being appropriate objects of <sup>paid</sup> educational leave.

## 3. How much leave?

Generally the amount of leave granted to an employee in Canada is at the discretion of the employer. University sabbatical leaves are typically for six months to one year duration and an employee is eligible every seventh year. French legislation grants up to 1200 hours of leave and some German legislation provides for one or two weeks each year.

4. An employee right?

It would appear that most existing educational leave in Canada is granted to employees by employers for lengths of time and for purposes decided by the employer. Some European schemes, however, have established the right of employees to take educational leaves of varying amounts for purposes the employee deems most appropriate within guidelines established by legislation. The ILO refrained from recommending the establishment of a new employee right to educational leave. It did recommend, however, that "workers should remain free to decide in which education or training programmes they wish to participate".

5. Who should be eligible?

Preliminary European research indicates that those who are most educated are most likely to take advantage of educational leave. In order to avoid an enlarging gap between the highly educated and the under educated some European countries have introduced legislation providing special incentives for the latter group while restricting the access of the former.

6. Who should pay?

The cost of educational leave as it currently exists in Canada would appear to be borne primarily by employers. Under some European legislation, the cost is shared by government.

The following questions emerge from this overview:

Is current practice in Canada adequate? If not, should the government adopt a policy of encouraging the further development of educational leave via unilateral employer decisions, via collective bargaining and/or via legislation?

Should employees have a right to educational leave? If so, for what purposes: vocational training, general and social training, trade union education; and for what length of time?

Should everyone be equally eligible for leave or should there be special incentives for the under educated?

Who should bear the cost of educational leave?

#### The Impact of Educational Leave

The most difficult part of our task will be to make an assessment of the impact of educational leave. During our preliminary work we have uncovered a substantial list of potential costs and benefits. It has been suggested that a well developed system of educational leave may have all of the following beneficial effects:

- The productivity of the work force may be increased both by the training which occurs while the employee is on leave as well as by the subsidiary effects of educational leave.

- The motivation of employees to produce may be increased as a result of the knowledge that advancement is more possible.
- Employees may be less prone to absenteeism if they are able, through educational leave, to expand their knowledge of work and their position and opportunities within the system.
- Capable employees may be attracted to undesirable jobs if they are convinced that through educational leave they may be able to eventually qualify for more interesting and demanding positions.
- Employees may be less prone to skill obsolescence if educational leave opportunities are available.
- The problem of functional illiteracy in adults may be reduced through the use of educational leave.
- Immigrants may be more smoothly assimilated into Canadian society.
- Educational leave might be a useful device for rectifying discrimination against women, Francophones, native people and other minority groups.
- Older workers may be able to prepare more effectively for retirement.
- By opening more job opportunities, educational leave may be an instrument for reducing the rate of unemployment.
- It may also be a tool for addressing the problem of declining enrolments in the schools.

On the other hand, the cost of an expansion of educational leave may have serious negative effects:

- If employers are required to bear the burden of financing new provisions, their ability to compete in international markets may be hampered. Moreover, educational leave might be used frivolously, thus negating the potential benefits and undermining individual responsibility for personal development.
- If educational leave is financed through government expenditures, taxes may have to be increased and taxpayers might be unwilling to accept the increase.
- Some observers feel that a legislative response to the question of educational leave would be unacceptable because, they allege, there is too much government regulation at present. Suggestions have been made that the amount of current government regulation is already counter-productive and that any expansion would decrease rather than increase productivity.
- Individual employers may be unwilling to introduce educational leave schemes for fear that employees who acquire new skills through such training will be attracted to other enterprises.

These propositions both for and against educational leave are extremely difficult to assess with accuracy. For example, much of the existing research on the relationship

between level of education and productivity is inconclusive. Even with unlimited resources of time and money it is doubtful if all of these issues could be conclusively resolved. We have only months and a limited budget. We plan to carry out a limited empirical research programme and to model the effects of a selected sample of educational leave schemes on a number of potential outcomes noted above.

Submissions of interested parties on these issues would be welcome.



